

A United Labor Front Against Fascism!

Manifesto of the Communist Opposition

To The Central Committee And To The Members Of The Communist Party Of The United States:

The unity of labor against Fascism and the offensive of capital is the great need of the hour. With the way opened before them by the criminal policy of compromise and surrender of the Social-democracy, by years of practise of the policy of the "lesser evil," the Nazi murder regime is in the saddle in Germany and capitalist reaction has received a tremendous impetus all over the world. Upon the international Communist movement has fallen the grave responsibility in this crisis of raising and championing the tactics of labor unity against the class enemy.

In its Manifesto, published in the "Daily Worker" of March 18, the Executive Committee of the Communist International urges all Communist Parties to propose to the Social-democratic Parties and to the labor organizations of the various countries, a united front against Fascism and the offensive of capital. The Communist Opposition, which has for years championed the Leninist tactics of the united front and emphasized the life-and-death necessity of the unity of labor against capitalist reaction and the menace of Fascism, enthusiastically greets this sharp and very welcome turn in official Communist tactics and pledges itself to throw all its energies into a genuine and thoroughgoing execution of a policy of unity. Never were Communist unity and the united action of labor more needed than today and no obstacle must be permitted to stand in the way of their realization.

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TWO DANGERS!

It is in this spirit, in the constructive spirit of contributing to the development

of a really effective turn in the tactics of the Communist International and of our party, that we raise the following grave political questions for your consideration and for the consideration of all party members:

1. In its enlarged session of February-March 1926, the Executive Committee of the Communist International indicated two fundamental mistakes that a Communist Party must avoid in applying the tactics of the united front: "(a) In the cases in which our parties have appealed to the Social-democrats, they have put up as a condition for common action demands which are not immediately acceptable to the reformistically inclined workers . . . (b) In attempting to reach an agreement with the Social-democracy, our organizations have sometimes undertaken the obligation of carrying out no agitation against the Social-democratic party."

As laid down in the Manifesto of the E.C.C.I. and as reiterated in the statement of the Secretariat of the C.C. of the C.P. U.S.A., published in the "Daily Worker" on March 18, the united front policy contains both of these grave errors. At the present time to insist that a united labor front, in the U. S. A. as in other countries, be set up not on one or two fundamental, burning issues but on an extensive, all-inclusive program, embracing everything from Roosevelt's economy program and the shipment of munitions to Japan up to German Fascism, is very clearly to "put up as a condition for common action demands which are not immediately acceptable" to the masses of the workers in the A. F. of L. unions and the S.P. It would be far more realistic and would serve much more effectively the cause of labor unity, if the at-

tempt were made to initiate each united front action on a closely related group of immediate issues, above all today on the basis of a protest against the Nazi murder regime and of a movement for the relief and defense of the victims of the Fascist terror in Germany.

To undertake to "refrain from making attacks on the Social-democratic organizations . . . during the time of common fight against capital and Fascism", as the E.C.C.I. recommends, is a most serious violation of Communist principle. It represents a capitulation to the "non-aggression pact" manœuvres of the Social-democratic leaders; it results in virtual liquidation of the Communist Party. In the original theses on the united front issued by the Communist International in 1922, the Executive Committee warned:

"The Executive of the Communist International considers the absolute and complete independence of each Communist Party entering into any contact with the parties of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals as the main condition, equally and unreservedly ultimate for the Communist Parties of all countries; and particularly their complete freedom in expounding their views and in their criticism of the adversaries of Communism. Whilst the Communists submit to the principles of a common action, they must preserve the right and possibility of expressing their opinion on the policy of all the organizations of the working class without exception, not only before or after the action but, if necessary, even during the action. Any desistance from this condition is not to be allowed under any circumstances whatever."

We feel it necessary to warn that, unless these two grave errors are immediately corrected, the turn of the E.C.C.I. will be futile; it will remain merely a gesture on paper, sterile, without meaning except to add to the confusion; or, what is even worse, it will lead to the disarming of the Communist Party before the trade union officials and the Socialist leaders.

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THE TURN MUST BE EVALUATED

2. If the new turn is to be effective, it must be openly and honestly recognized as a sharp change in policy and so evaluated. It is impossible to attack a certain policy one day as "counter-revolutionary" and then adopt it the next day, as if nothing had ever happened—and yet expect the new policy to be taken seriously by the Communists and the workers as a whole. There can be no successful united front unless the non-

party workers are convinced that it is meant in earnest.

Towards the middle of 1929, the authoritative spokesman of the Communist International, Comrade Manuilsky, declared, in his main report at the X Plenum of the E.C.C.I.:

"Let us consider the question of the tactics of the united front. We have never considered it as a formula for everybody, for all times and peoples. Today we are stronger and we proceed to more aggressive methods in the struggle for the majority of the working class."

Just about one year later, towards the middle of 1930, Comrade Molotov, reporting on the Communist International at the XVI congress of the C.P.S.U., told us that "the essence of the tactics of 'class against class' consists in the rejection of all alliances with the Social-democracy. Only three years ago, the Communist Parties still used to make these temporary alliances with the Social-democracy but the transition to the tactics of 'class against class' has liquidated all such alliances." Commenting on the political results of the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., "Pravda" (April 24, 1931) went even farther. "There can be no block," it declared, "with the Social-democratic workers against Fascism."

In the face of these and countless similar declarations it is the sheerest self-deception for the Communist International to insist today that its recent Manifesto represents no change of course! For the sake of the absolutely necessary political clarification without which no Communist action is possible, for the sake of the very effective execution of the turn, for the sake of gaining the confidence of the workers in the genuineness of the new turn, the radical character of the change of policy must be openly stated and brought home to all party members and workers.

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NO "UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW"!

3. If the new turn is to be effective, it must be made whole-heartedly and without any reservations. The Manifesto of the E.C.C.I. while marking a generally welcome change in tactical line, unfortunately leaves the door open to the thoroughly discredited tactics of the "united front from below." It urges the Communist Parties, "immediately and without waiting for the results of the negotiations and agreements with the Social-democracy with regard to a common fight, to proceed to organize joint fighting committees with Social-democratic workers and with workers of other persuasions." It is necessary to emphasize that this is no more nor less than the old tactics of the

"united front from below." If such a policy is to be carried out it will make impossible any real united front at all and the whole new turn will become a mere deceptive trick that will cost our movement dear in the confidence of the workers and our prestige among them.

4. If the new turn is to be effective, it cannot be restricted to one field or branch of tactics; it must be made general. Is it possible to make a genuine united front appeal to the A.F. of L. and yet continue the sectarian trade union course of splitting and dual unionism? Is it possible to advocate a real united front policy and yet stage such spectacles as the recent Albany "unemployment conference" and the New York "Free Mooney conference," examples of sectarianism run mad? There must be a rock-bottom change all along the line or else the new turn will only add to the confusion and chaos, will only intensify the impotence of the Communist movement.

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FOR COMMUNIST UNITY!

5. If the new turn is to be genuine, it must be accompanied by a movement for the unification of the Communist movement, now split and divided. If the tactics proposed for so many years by the Communist Opposition are now to be adopted by the Communist International how can the mass expulsions of the oppositional Communists be further maintained? If the Communist Oppositionists are "renegades" and "counter-revolutionists" how can the tactics which they have championed for years now be adopted? In the present grave situation, we again appeal to the Central Committee of the Communist Party to take up the question of Communist unity, to appoint a committee to discuss with a similar committee of ours the unification of our movement, on the basis of the restoration of party democracy, the readmission of the expelled and the calling of an emergency party convention.

6. Finally, it must be emphasized, in the words of the 1922 theses of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, that "whilst the Communist International is allowing agreements to be entered into between the separate sections of the Communist International and the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, it certainly cannot desist now from entering into similar agreements on an international scale." No real united world struggle against Fascism is possible except on the basis of a definite united front agreement reached by the leaderships of the Communist and Socialist Internationals. An effective united front policy cannot dodge the question of an international agreement with the Social-democracy

on the issues of fighting against Fascism and the capitalist reaction.

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FOR THE SEVENTH C.I. CONGRESS

The many grave questions of policy and tactics raised by the Manifesto of the E.C.C.I. are of vital significance to our movement. They must be thoroly and freely discussed in the light of our past experiences and of our future tasks. They are problems that involve the life and work not only of our party but of the whole Communist International. Such a basic political discussion is all the more necessary in order to prevent the loss of many party members who have been only too well "educated" by four years of the theory and practise of ultra-left sectarianism and who will now find it very difficult indeed to readjust themselves to the sharp change of policy. For all these reasons, we strongly urge the immediate convocation of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, already overdue more than three years, to be preceded by a special convention of our party. If these congresses are to mean anything in the life and development of our movement, they must be organized on the basis of real party democracy, with the guarantee of full freedom of expression of opinion for all tendencies. The previous readmission on a world scale of all comrades expelled for opposing the ultra-left course, on the basis of agreement with the fundamental principles of Communism and pledge to abide by party discipline rooted in party democracy, is, of course, absolutely essential for any really fruitful discussion in the Comintern, for any basic and effective change in line.

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TWO ROADS

Comrades! The Comintern and our party stand at the parting of the ways. One road leads to the rehabilitation and reunification of our movement, to the restoration of its political influence and its organizational strength, to the establishment of an effective fighting front of labor against Fascism and capitalist reaction! The other road leads to an intensification of the sectarianism, isolation and political confusion that have brought our movement to the brink of ruin, to the further discredit of Communism among the masses, to the even greater disunity and demoralization of labor under the blows of capital! We call upon you to appreciate the gravity of the crisis in time, to unite and to consolidate our forces so as to guarantee that our movement takes the first road—the road to victory!

National Committee

COMMUNIST PARTY of the U.S.A.
(Opposition)

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For world labor unity against Fascism and reaction!

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